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ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE

Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay: draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/7 of 19 October 1993 and 49/215 of 23 December 1994 on assistance in mine clearance, both adopted without a vote,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian problem caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded devices that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-infested countries and constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions,

Reiterating its dismay at the high number of victims of mines, especially among civilian populations, particularly children, and recalling in this context Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/79 of 8 March 1995 on the rights of the child, 1/

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

Deeply alarmed that the number of mines being laid each year, as well as the presence of a large number of mines and other unexploded devices as a result of armed conflicts, exponentially outweighs the number of such mines that can be cleared during that time, and thus convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine clearance efforts by the international community,

Recognizing the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, in accordance with international law,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded devices pose to the safety, the health and the lives of personnel participating in humanitarian, peace-keeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Conscious of the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-clearance techniques, as well as the need for improvements thereof and the lack of global coordination in the field of research to improve mine-clearance technology and the urgent need to foster international technical cooperation in this field,

Aware that the rate of mine clearance needs to improve substantially if the global land-mine problem is to be effectively tackled,

Recalling its resolution 50/74 of 12 December 1995 on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects 2/ and the convening by the Secretary-General of the Review Conference of the States Parties to that Convention at Vienna from 25 September to 13 October 1995, taking note, in this regard, of the decision of the Review Conference to continue its work in order to conclude negotiations on the strengthening of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II), 2/ and welcoming in this regard the additional ratifications of or accessions to the Convention,

Recalling also its resolutions 48/75 K of 16 December 1993, 49/75 D of 15 December 1994 and 50/70 O of 12 December 1995 calling for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines, and welcoming, in this regard, the export moratorium adopted by several States,

Bearing in mind that significant progress needs to be achieved in these fields,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has an important role in the field of assistance in mine clearance,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peace-keeping operations of provisions relating to mine-clearance work carried out

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2/ See The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, vol. 5: 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IX.4), appendix VII.

under the direction of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations of the Secretariat, in the context of such operations,

Commending the activities already undertaken by the United Nations system, donor and recipient Governments, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded devices,

Also commending the role of the Secretary-General through the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat in increasing public awareness of the problem of land-mines and for the establishment of the Central Land-mine Database and its inventories of mine-awareness materials and mine-clearance techniques,

Commending in particular the outcome of the International Meeting on Mine Clearance held at Geneva from 5 to 7 July 1995, in which notable financial pledges were gathered for the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance and for the development of a de-mining stand-by capacity by the United Nations,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations on assistance in mine-clearance and the operation of the voluntary trust fund, and takes note with interest of the proposals contained therein; 3/

2. Welcomes, in particular, the efforts made by the United Nations to foster the establishment of national mine-clearance capacities in countries where mines constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population, and urges all Member States, particularly those that have a capacity to do so, to assist afflicted countries in the establishment and development of their national mine-clearance capacities;

3. Expresses its appreciation to Member States, United Nations organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that participated in the International Meeting on Mine Clearance for their strong expression of cooperation in the field of assistance in mine clearance, and particularly States and regional organizations for their financial contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance as well as for providing the necessary means to establish a de-mining stand-by capacity within the United Nations;

4. Appeals to Member States as well as to intergovernmental organizations and foundations to continue to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance and to continue to supply the necessary means to the United Nations to foster its de-mining stand-by capacity;

3/ A/50/408.

5. Invites all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine clearance in their humanitarian, social and economic assistance activities;

6. Emphasizes again, in this connection, the importance of coordination by the United Nations of activities related to mine clearance, including those by regional organizations, in particular activities related to information and training;

7. Welcomes the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to coordinate mine-related activities and, in particular the establishment, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations organizations, of comprehensive mine-action programmes, and encourages the Department to continue and enhance those efforts within existing resources with a view to improving the effectiveness of assistance in mine clearance by the United Nations;

8. Calls upon the Secretary-General to designate the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the focal point in the United Nations for coordinating de-mining and related issues, as the repository of information and for encouraging and facilitating the international research to improve mine-clearance methods;

9. Urges Member States, regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data as well as other appropriate resources which could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in the field of mine awareness, training, surveying, mine-detection and clearance, scientific research for mine detection and clearance technology and information on and distribution of medical equipment and supplies;

10. Calls upon Member States, especially those that have a capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby-traps and other devices in accordance with international law;

11. Urges Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-afflicted countries as well as to promote scientific research and development on humanitarian mine-clearance techniques and technology so that mine clearance activities may be more effectively carried out at lower costs and through safer means and to promote international collaboration in this regard;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session a report on the progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined in his reports to the Assembly at its forty-ninth 4/ and fiftieth 3/

4/ A/49/357 and Add.1 and 2.

sessions on assistance in mine clearance and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance;

13. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Assistance in mine clearance".